

In the News

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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Message from the Mayor

On Saturday, October 26th, I will announce the release of the District of Columbia's Citywide Strategic Plan and 39 Strategic Neighborhood Action Plans at the Frank D. Reeves Center. This is an important step in our city government's history, and a groundbreaking step in the way government interacts with citizens. It was made possible by my Neighborhood Action Initiative, one among many very profound changes in terms of our city's approach to finding workable solutions to crucial issues.

In 1999, citizens came together at the inaugural Citizen Summit and created the priority areas for District government. Those priority areas were: Children, Youth, Family and Elders; Building Sustainable Neighborhoods; Promoting Economic Development; Making Government Work, and Enhancing Unity of Purpose and Democracy. Two years later, in October 2001, Citizen Summit II updated the vision and aspirations for our city and created the substance for our vision of *One City, One Future*.

In January 2001, District residents began working with their District government Neighborhood Planners and Neighborhood Service Coordinators to develop citizen-driven action plans for each of the city's 39 Neighborhood Clusters. These work groups resulted in Strategic Neighborhood Action Plans or "SNAPs" that represent priority neighborhood issues, recommended actions to improve neighborhood conditions, and commitments from District agencies, non-profits, community organizations, and citizens themselves.

The SNAPs are a new kind of "plan for action," important documents that represent key commitments by District agencies and citizens to prioritize resources around the most critical neighborhood issues over the next two fiscal years. The completion of the SNAPs and the Citywide Strategic Plan shows how the concept of Neighborhood Action has finally come full circle. That concept links citizens to their government from a citywide and neighborhood perspective.

We've held more than 100 community meetings in the past few years, at which Neighborhood Action has engaged residents in every neighborhood to determine how we will move communities forward. For accountability, all this information is collected and monitored in the neighborhood cluster database monitored by Neighborhood Action.

To make sure Neighborhood Action has real outcomes and citizen's voices are listened to, I've tied the data collected for the Citywide Strategic Plan (through Citizen Summits) to my agency budgets. Each agency sets its priorities around input from citizens collected at our summits and neighborhood planning meetings. Now that's government working with and for the people!



AGENCY WEBSITES

[Office of Tax and Revenue](#)

[Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

[Department of Employment Services](#)

[Metropolitan Police Department](#)

[Office of Boards and Commissions](#)

[Commission on the Arts and Humanities](#)

[Advisory Neighborhood Commissions](#)

30th Anniversary of Clean Water Act

It was my great pleasure last week to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Clean Water Act. The Clean Water Act was a huge milestone in the environmental movement and was instrumental in achieving results, particularly on the Potomac River.

Unfortunately, the Anacostia River did not benefit as much from passage of the Act as did the Potomac. Water quality results between the District's two rivers are dramatically different. The Anacostia, named one of the country's most endangered rivers, suffers from centuries of pollution. When the federal government constructed our sewer system in 1890, it was designed to carry the sewage under the Anacostia, far away from the White House, Capitol Hill, and the other offices of government. While local and national efforts to clean up the Anacostia over the past three decades have been unprecedented, we all know that hard work remains.

We can see the Anacostia River beginning to come back to life. We are well on our way to restoring Kingman and Heritage Islands to natural wildlife recreational areas. Once again, we have bald eagles nesting on the Anacostia. In fact, two years ago—for the first time in half a century—bald eagles raised young on the Anacostia. I am heartened that our national symbol has come back to DC.

As we work toward cleaner waterways, it's crucial to note the importance of the federal and local partnerships. Here in the District of Columbia, we have a highly successful partnership between our government, the DC Water and Sewer Authority, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the public. Together we are developing a plan to remedy the combined sewer overflows to our city's rivers.

I'm proud to say that the District has presented a long-term control plan to EPA to alleviate sewage discharges into our waters. We now look to all stakeholders, including the federal government, to support this plan and to seek funding for it. I am heartened that both DC Appropriations subcommittees have approved \$50 million to move this plan forward.

We recognize the great challenge ahead of us, especially during these times of fiscal constraints, to fulfill so many environmental commitments. However, I am confident that the District of Columbia and its regional and federal partners will continue to work together to meet this challenge.

Employee Profile Silvia Garrick

"Silvia Garrick's achievements on behalf of Latino consumers are nothing short of spectacular," says People's Counsel Elizabeth A. Noel. "Her efforts have set a standard for multi-lingual service delivery, which the Office of the People's Counsel (OPC) is committed to upholding on behalf of all utility consumers in the District of Columbia."

Silvia V. Garrick is the OPC Hispanic Program Outreach Coordinator. On October 5, she was honored with a "Gracias Award" at the District government's first Latino Day, along with People's Counsel Elizabeth Noel who was honored with a certificate for her office's commitment to community education.

In her position as outreach coordinator, Silvia works tirelessly to expand the reach of her agency's consumer education efforts on utility issues and consumers' rights in the public utility process. She makes presentations to both Spanish and English speaking groups, and she organizes events to meet the needs of the Latino community. She also manages the translation of OPC documents into Spanish and various Asian languages.

A native of Panama, Silvia resides in the Brightwood neighborhood of Northwest DC. Thanks, Sylvia, for your great work on behalf of utility consumers in the District!



Silvia Garrick



LINK TO OTHER
WEBSITES

[DC Agenda](#)

[Hands on DC](#)

[DC Convention
and Tourism](#)

[DC Public Library](#)

Household Finance Settlement

On October 11, I announced that in a landmark settlement, mortgage lender Household Finance agreed with state and District of Columbia government regulators to change its lending practices. Household Finance also agreed to pay up to \$484 million to consumers nationally—including about \$200,000 to District of Columbia consumers for alleged unfair and deceptive lending practices in the “subprime” market.

The restitution amount is believed to be the largest ever in a state or federal consumer protection case. Officials from the District’s Department of Banking and Financial Institutions (DBFI) and Office of the Corporation Counsel (OCC) worked with the multi-state group on this historic agreement.

Regulators said Household violated state and District mortgage, lending, and consumer protection laws by misrepresenting loan terms and failing to disclose material information to borrowers. Consumers had complained to authorities that Household charged far higher interest rates than promised, imposed costly prepayment penalties, or misled consumers about insurance policies, resulting in some consumers becoming trapped in costly loans.

In many cases, officials claim, Household failed to inform consumers of loan costs and insurance premiums included in their loans. In other cases, borrowers who were led to believe they were receiving interest rates of about 7 or 8 percent were actually charged nearly twice that much. Borrowers also complained that they were charged costly prepayment penalties that were not clearly disclosed to them.

District of Columbia and state officials said Household cooperated with the investigation once authorities presented their concerns. The company worked with the multi-jurisdiction group over a period of about four months to develop and negotiate solutions. Government officials said they believe the agreement-in-principle that was reached will set new standards for the industry. The settlement includes Household Finance Corp., Household Realty Corp., and Beneficial Finance Corp.

Officials also said the settlement provides nationwide relief to consumers and addresses practices in the lending industry that have been and will continue to be a priority effort for state and District consumer protection and banking regulators.

The DBFI is establishing a procedure to identify, qualify, and notify customers who may receive restitution or other relief under this settlement. Officials there will provide additional information as it becomes available.

Goodbye ‘Party Animals’

Our very own ‘Party Animals’ have disappeared—and for a good cause.

The donkeys and elephants that adorned city sidewalks in a great display of art and expression were auctioned off last week for \$325,000. That money will go toward benefiting programs of the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

The October 24 event, at the Marriott Wardman Park in northwest Washington, drew 700 people. Some of the original sponsors purchased the ‘Party Animals’. Others went to interested buyers who couldn’t hold back once they attended the auction and had the opportunity to snatch up the animals.

I’m proud to say that ‘Party Animals’ was the most successful public art exhibition in the history of the District of Columbia. The Party Animals project is a perfect example of how the cultural, business, and government communities can work together to the benefit of the entire city.

If you look back over the last four years, our togetherness has helped us to succeed in becoming one city with one future. The ‘Party Animals’ managed to bring together the worlds of the private sector, government, and the arts. Government cannot do it alone. Partnerships are critical to this city, especially in tight fiscal times.

So we celebrate the work of over 200 artists who participated in the design of the sculptures. Each has a different view on life. Each sees the world in his or her own way. Let’s salute all the artists who worked so hard on the ‘Party Animals.’ The displays and the auction would not have been possible without their hard work.

Most importantly, the \$325,000 raised from the ‘Party Animals’ auction will help artists and arts educators who make cultural experiences central to the education of our city’s children, and it will support the important work of our city’s artists.



Get Rid of Your Household Hazardous Waste

It is estimated that the average home contains between 50 and 100 pounds of accumulated hazardous wastes including car batteries, paint, and petroleum products.

The District Department of Public Works (DPW) will hold its annual fall Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day on Saturday, November 2, from 9 am to 3 pm in the Carter Barron Amphitheater parking lot at 16th and Kennedy Streets, NW.

District of Columbia residents may bring the following items to the collection site for environmentally safe disposal or recycling: old cleaning and gardening chemicals, small quantities of gasoline, pesticides and poisons, acids, varnish, oil-based paints, solvents, aerosols, wood preservatives, spent batteries of all kinds, roofing tar, chemistry sets, automotive fluids, and even asbestos floor tiles

DPW will also have a special electronics recycler on-site for Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day. Residents can bring televisions and audio equipment (except speakers), computers, computer parts, and computer components. All computer monitors and TV screens must be intact, not cracked, punctured, or shattered. A small fee will be charged only for disposal of TVs and computer monitors, which contain a significant amount of lead and require special handling. The fee will depend on the size of the screen (CRT tube).

Items that will not be accepted on Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day include ammunition, explosives, bulk trash and tires, wooden TV consoles, propane tanks, microwave ovens and other appliances, and radioactive or biologically active wastes.

A professional hazardous waste contractor will remove materials from your vehicle, and a licensed hauler will take the waste to an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved facility for processing.

District Activities



Mayor Williams presents WASA board member David Bardin with a proclamation declaring October Clean Water Month in the District.



Mayor Williams takes calls from constituents at the Citywide Call Center during Customer Service Week.



Mayor Williams steps out at Taste of DC.



Mayor Williams lunches with employees honored for excellence in customer service during Customer Service Week.



Community News

- [Senate Committee Favors Voting Rights for District Residents](#)
- [DC Department of Mental Health Offers Counseling Help Line](#)
- [Giant Food Opens New Store in Brentwood](#)

[Click here](#) to view news releases.

Upcoming Events

10/17 thru 10/31	The Fright House-Extreme Scream Park DC Armory See www.thefrighthouse.com for details.
10/26	Release of Strategic Neighborhood Action Plans and Citywide Strategic Plan 10 am Frank D. Reeves Center 2000 14th Street, NW
11/02	Fall Collection of Household Hazardous Waste 9 am - 3 pm Carter Barron Amphitheater Parking Lot 16th and Kennedy Streets, NW

[Click here](#) to view the Mayor's daily schedule.

